

California Social Work Education Center  
School of Social Welfare  
University of California, Berkeley

# Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program

Three-Year Outcome Report, 2005–2008

Prepared under the Direction  
of Professor James Midgley by  
Siroj Sirojudin and Anupama Jacob



# Table of Contents

Program Overview .....	4
<b>SECTION 1:</b>	
Enrollment and Employment Trends .....	8
<b>SECTION 2:</b>	
Distribution by Geographic Regions .....	10
<b>SECTION 3:</b>	
Student Diversity .....	12
<b>SECTION 4:</b>	
Languages Spoken .....	14
<b>SECTION 5:</b>	
Post-Employment (Payback) Data for the 2005–2006 Cohort .....	16
<b>SECTION 6:</b>	
Curriculum Development .....	19
<b>SECTION 7:</b>	
Challenges and Future Directions .....	23



# Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program

Three-Year Outcome Report, 2005–2008

---

The following is a report on the outcomes of the first three years of the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program administered by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) at the School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley in collaboration with 17 graduate social work programs in California, the California Department of Mental Health, county mental health agencies, and nonprofit agencies contracting with the counties. In addition to providing information about the students who enrolled in the program when it was launched in fall 2005, it reports on graduation and employment rates. The data indicate that over the last three years, the program has graduated more than 500 master’s-level social workers who have found employment in California’s community mental health system. A major commitment of the program is to recruit minority and bilingual students and to ensure that all graduates are prepared to work with California’s diverse population and to be culturally competent social work practitioners. Information about the subsequent careers of the program’s first cohort of students who enrolled in 2005 and completed their employment obligations as required by the program is also provided. It shows that the majority of graduates completed their employment obligations and continue to work in California’s community mental health system. Indeed, many are still employed at the agency where they initially found employment. Although this report focuses on the last three years, it should be noted that another 185 students enrolled in the program in fall 2008.

---

# Program Overview

The Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program was launched in fall 2005 when an Interagency Agreement was signed between the California Department of Mental Health and the Regents of the University of California. As noted earlier, the program is administered by CalSWEC at the School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley. Seventeen graduate schools of social work in California currently participate in the program. All are actively involved in the CalSWEC consortium.

The program provides stipends and programmatic support to prepare culturally and linguistically competent graduate social workers for professional practice in California’s community mental health system. Students at the participating schools follow a prescribed curriculum in community mental health based on a strengths and recovery model. In addition to academic coursework, students complete a field practicum in county mental health agencies or nonprofit agencies contracting with local counties. Stipends are awarded to students who have completed the foundation year of the MSW curriculum. In most cases, this means that they are second-year students. The program is restricted to full-time students and requires that they graduate within one academic year of enrolling in the program. Generally, they enroll in the fall of each academic year and graduate early the following summer. The program also requires that graduates work in the community mental health system for one year in return for the stipends they received. Students are allowed 120 days after graduation to secure employment in an approved agency. Those who cannot meet the graduation or employment requirements may appeal for an extension through CalSWEC to the California Department of Mental Health. Relatively few students do not meet the program requirements within the specified time frame. The great majority graduate on time and find employment in approved agencies in California’s community mental health system.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program was created with the passage of Proposition 63—the Mental Health Services Act—in 2005, when the California voters approved a new 1% tax on income over \$1 million dedicated to enhancing the state’s community mental health services. Nearly \$1 billion has been raised to date and is being used to expand and transform the state’s public mental health system. A portion of this new and significant public revenue source has been allocated to workforce development such as the training of mental health professionals including social workers. CalSWEC and its 17 participating schools, with a proven record of collaboration with the State of California in preparing graduate social workers for practice in the public child welfare system, offered a well-organized infrastructure for the training of mental health social workers as well.

---

California's shortage of professional social workers in mental health, and indeed in other social service programs, has been acknowledged for many years. In 2002, the California State Assembly's Human Services Committee, chaired by Assemblywoman Dion Aroner, conducted hearings on social services workforce shortages, particularly the shortage of professional social workers. In 2003, the Legislature adopted a resolution calling on CalSWEC and its participating schools to prepare a master plan for the expansion of educational opportunities for public-sector employment of professional social workers. The *Master Plan for Social Work Education in the State of California*, completed and adopted in 2004, currently guides CalSWEC's activities. The adoption of Proposition 63 by California's voters has provided a fortuitous revenue source for the expansion of professional education in community mental health social work.

The Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program is fortunate to have the support of several California foundations. Prior to the creation of the program, the Zellerbach Family Foundation provided generous support for the social work workforce studies that supported the legislative hearings in the California State Assembly. Since then, the foundation has supported a number of curriculum development initiatives designed to enhance the curriculum offerings in community mental health offered at the participating schools. The California Wellness Foundation provided initial support for research, and the California Endowment funded a major study of the most effective recruitment strategies for increasing the number of minority students in mental health and in California's schools of social work.

The mental health stipend program has now begun its fourth year. Last fall, a new three-year contract was signed between the California Department of Mental Health and the Regents of the University of California for the continuation of the program. This new contract continues the collaboration begun among the Department of Mental Health, the county mental health agencies, the nonprofit and advocacy communities, and schools of social work in California. The participating schools are committed to refining the mental health curriculum, ensuring high-quality internships, and maintaining strong institutional cooperation with both county and community-based mental health agencies. They are also committed to reaching the goal of increasing the availability of culturally and linguistically competent professionally trained graduate social workers in the community mental health system.

---

## ADMINISTRATION

The funds for stipends are provided by the California Department of Mental Health. CalSWEC is responsible for contract oversight and management, while the member schools are responsible for recruiting and placing the students as well as for managing the stipends. Member schools also provide a specialized educational experience, guided by a set of core curriculum competencies for community mental health practice. The deans and directors of the participating schools serve as principal investigators and are responsible for the administration of each program. They are assisted by project coordinators (PCs) who handle the daily operation of the program and are the first point of contact at each school for the students enrolled in the program. The PCs also maintain records of student graduation and employment trends. They usually handle student appeals and other problems and issues as they arise.

Professor James Midgley, former dean of the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley, served as principal investigator from August 2005 to January 2009. Dean Lorraine Midanik has now assumed this role. In January 2009, Ms. Gwen Foster was appointed director of the program. She is assisted by Ms. Linda Harrison, the program representative.

Under the leadership of Dr. Beverly Buckles, and with the assistance of Mr. John Ryan and Ms. Jan Black, Loma Linda University is the lead partner on developing curricula to implement the core training program. They developed standardized curriculum competencies that the participating schools have adopted and have organized numerous workshops and conferences on curriculum issues. They also provide ongoing technical advice to the participating schools on curriculum issues.

The participating schools regularly submit reports on student enrollment, graduation, and employment data that are provided to the Department of Mental Health on a quarterly basis. In addition, a longer-term outcome study is currently being implemented to obtain information about the post-payback employment of graduates and about the way the stipend program affects the educational and employment experiences of the program participants.

A subcommittee of the CalSWEC Executive Committee (consisting of Dr. Buckles, Dr. Teresa Morris, Mr. Allan Rawland, Dr. Marvin Southard, Mr. Warren Hayes, and Dean Midanik) advises the program. The subcommittee works closely with the CalSWEC Executive Committee and the Mental Health Committee, a larger body comprised of the deans and directors of California's schools of social work, state and county representatives, and representatives of the nonprofit and advocacy community. This committee is co-chaired by Dr. Buckles and Mr. Ryan.

---

## THIS REPORT

The following is a report on the outcomes and achievements of the first three years of the program—from 2005 to 2008. The report is divided into seven sections. Section 1 presents an overview of the cohorts of students who enrolled in the program and received stipends over the last three years focusing on enrollment and graduation data. The employment progress of each of the cohort of students who graduated from the program is also discussed. Section 2 describes the regional distribution of the stipend recipients. Sections 3 and 4, respectively, review the ethnicity of and the languages spoken by the participants. Section 5 provides a follow-up study of those who completed their one-year payback requirement. This study is designed to track these graduates beyond the payback period and determine whether they continue to work in California in community mental health system or whether they move into other fields. Section 6 briefly describes some of the initiatives undertaken by Dr. Buckles, Mr. Ryan, and Ms. Black at Loma Linda University to enhance the mental health curriculum component of the MSW curriculum at the participating schools of social work. They have worked closely with the deans and directors of the schools as well as the project coordinators to ensure that the curriculum is based on an appropriate recovery and resilience model and that this professional education conforms to the spirit of the Mental Health Services Act. These activities form a complementary and critical component of the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program. Finally, Section 7 discusses the program’s challenges and future directions.



## Enrollment and Employment Trends

**B**etween 2005 and 2008, the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program enrolled a total of 545 students. In addition, another 185 students enrolled in fall 2008. Information about the latest cohort and their graduation and employment will be provided in a future report. This section of the report focuses on the 545 students who enrolled in the program between 2005 and 2007 and who graduated by 2008. Information about these students is grouped into three cohorts (2005–2006, 2006–2007, 2007–2008).

As noted previously, the great majority of the students completed the program requirements, graduated, and secured employment in California’s community mental health system within the required timeframe. Most have also completed their one-year employment obligation. The following summarizes information about enrollment and employment trends with reference to the three cohorts.

### THE 2005–2006 COHORT

The first cohort consisted of 174 students. Of these, 153 students (88%) graduated within the required time period (by early summer 2006). The remaining 21 appealed for an extension, but by June 2008 all of them had graduated.

Unfortunately, 20 (12%) of the cohort’s graduates dropped out of the program soon after completing the MSW and instead of accepting employment in the community mental health system, they decided to repay the stipend. The schools reported that the first cohort experienced difficulties in finding eligible employment partly because the program was new and agencies were not aware that students had been specifically prepared for community mental health practice. Accordingly, a number of students decided to accept employment in social work fields that were not approved for meeting the one-year payback requirement and then repaid their stipends. A few successfully appealed to be allowed to extend the job search process. Nevertheless, all of the 154 remaining graduates have now completed their payback requirement. As will be reported later, the majority of these graduates continued to work in community mental health beyond their employment payback obligation.

---

## THE 2006-2007 COHORT

The second cohort consisted of 187 students. Of these, 172 students (92%) graduated within the required time period (by early summer 2007). The remaining 15 students (8%) appealed and by December 2008, only 1 had not graduated.

Information gathered from schools revealed that the second cohort found employment a little more easily than the first cohort. The latest employment figures of this cohort reveal that of the 187 students who enrolled in the program, 169 (85%) obtained employment in an approved agency within the required time period. Of the 169 graduates who obtained employment, 110 (59%) found employment in contract mental health agencies, and 59 (31%) found employment in county mental health agencies. All of them had completed their payback requirement by December 2008.

However, about 18 (9.5%) were unable to fulfill the employment requirement on time and have submitted appeals for extension. By December 2008, 13 (7%) students are still in the payback employment period, 2 (1%) are still seeking employment, and 2 (1%) students have decided to repay the stipend.

## THE 2007-2008 COHORT

The third cohort consisted of 184 students. Of these, 179 (97%) graduated within the required time period (by early summer 2008). The remaining 5 students (3%) successfully appealed.

The most recent data (December 2008) provided by the schools reveal that 146 (79%) of those who graduated have found employment at qualifying mental health agencies within the required time period and are fulfilling their one-year payback requirement. However, 24 students (13%) are still seeking employment, and 9 (5%) have not confirmed whether they will continue to seek employment or repay the stipend. However, because data are still being collected, the information provided here is tentative although substantially accurate.

## Distribution by Geographic Region

An important goal of the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program is to increase the number of professionally qualified social work students in California's underserved areas, which are predominantly rural areas in the northern counties. Table 1 reports on the regional distribution of the students who enrolled in the program. The data show that the largest number of students (164 or 30%) are enrolled at schools of social work in the Los Angeles area. This includes California State University, Long Beach, which is in Orange County. In the Bay Area counties, 129 students (24%) are enrolled. The third and fourth largest regions are other Southern California counties, with 116 students (21%), and the Central region counties, with 104 students (19%). The two schools of social work in the Northern counties enrolled 32 students (6%).

These trends are summarized in Table 1. The data show that unfortunately, the schools of social work in the state's underserved areas, such as the northern counties, are enrolling the fewest students. Although the Los Angeles area and the Bay Area have sizable numbers of students, enrollments in the Central and Southern counties are comparatively high, resulting—with the exception of the Northern counties—in a reasonably equitable distribution of students around the state.

TABLE 1

**DISTRIBUTION BY REGION AND SCHOOLS**

REGION	UNIVERSITIES	YEAR			SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL	%
		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08			
Northern Counties	CSU Chico	8	6	8	22	32	6
	CSU Humboldt	3	5	2	10		
Central Counties	CSU Bakersfield	3	5	5	13	10	19
	CSU Fresno	8	8	10	26		
	Sacramento State University	12	20	20	52		
	CSU Stanislaus	5	4	4	13		
Bay Area Counties	CSU East Bay	10	15	15	40	129	24
	San Francisco State University	10	10	9	29		
	San Jose State University	10	10	10	30		
	UC Berkeley	10	10	10	30		
Southern Counties	CSU San Bernardino	15	14	15	44	116	21
	San Diego State University	13	15	14	42		
	Loma Linda University	16	8	6	30		
LA Region Counties	CSU Long Beach	14	20	20	54	164	30
	CSU Los Angeles	7	7	7	21		
	UCLA	10	10	10	30		
	USC	20	20	19	59		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>100</b>

## Student Diversity

In addition to addressing the shortage of professionally qualified social workers able to practice effectively in California's community mental-health system, it has been previously noted that the mental health stipend program also seeks to increase the number of culturally and linguistically competent social workers in the mental health system. The shortage of culturally and linguistically competent social workers in California's community mental health system has been viewed with concern for many years. Accordingly, the participating schools have made a determined effort to recruit minority students, and an important achievement of the program is the recruitment of significant numbers of students from underrepresented minorities into California's graduate social work programs.

Tables 2 and 3 provide a summary of the distribution of the ethnicity of the students in the three cohorts. Tables 4 and 5 summarize the languages spoken by the students. This information was provided voluntarily by students. Unfortunately, information on languages spoken was not collected for the first cohort (2005–2006). Table 2 categorizes the self-report data provided by students into five major ethnic groups. Data are provided for each of the three student cohorts.

TABLE 2

### ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

ETHNIC GROUPS	2005–06		2006–07		2007–08		SUB-TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MINORITY STUDENTS								
American Indian	2	1	0	0	2	1	4	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	14	35	19	23	13	82	15
African American	17	10	19	10	18	10	54	10
Hispanic/Latino	40	23	47	25	45	24	132	24
Other	9	5	8	5	16	9	33	6
<i>Total Minority Students</i>	92	53	109	59	104	57	305	56
WHITE/CAUCASIAN	82	47	78	41	80	43	240	44
TOTAL	174	100	187	100	184	100	545	100

Table 2 shows that students in the mental health stipend program come from diverse backgrounds. Of the 174 students in the first cohort (2005–2006), 92 (53%) self-identified as ethnic minorities, ranging from American Indian to Asian/Pacific Islander. The largest group was White/Caucasian (47%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (23%), Asian/Pacific Islander (14%), African American (10%), and American Indian (1%). Nine (9) students (5%) self-reported as belonging to “Other” ethnicities and listed themselves as members of religious and linguistic groups. Only 1% declined to state their ethnicity.

Ethnic distribution was generally similar among the second (2006–2007) and third (2007–2008) cohorts, but the proportion of students reporting minority status increased significantly over the first year. While 53% of the 2005–2006 cohort self-reported as minorities, this expanded in 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 to 59% and 57%, respectively. This was largely due to the increase in Asian/Pacific Islander students in the 2006–2007 cohort and more students reporting “Other” in the 2007–2008 cohort. As shown in Table 2, the proportion of Asian/Pacific Islander students in the program increased from 14% in 2005–2006 to 19% in 2006–2007. The proportion of Hispanic/Latino in the program remained about the same, at 25%. The proportion of African American students also remained about the same, at 10%. The number of American Indian students has been extremely low. The proportion of students reporting “Other” grew from 5% in 2006–2007 to 9% in 2007–2008.

Table 3 shows the distribution of minority students receiving stipends by ethnic group. Hispanic/Latino students were the largest group, comprising 43% of the total. They were followed by Asian/Pacific Islander students (27%) and African American students (18%). Native American students comprise a very small group of minority students, suggesting that efforts to recruit more of these students should be expanded.

**TABLE 3**

**ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS OF MINORITY STUDENTS**

ETHNIC GROUPS	2005–06		2006–07		2007–08		PROPORTION	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
American Indian	2	2	0	0	2	2	4	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	26	35	32	23	22	82	27
African American	17	18	19	17	18	17	54	18
Hispanic/Latino	40	43	47	43	45	43	132	43
Other	9	10	8	7	16	15	33	11
<b>TOTAL MINORITIES</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>

## Languages Spoken

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the majority of students enrolled in the mental health stipend program are bilingual in that they speak English as well as other languages. Unfortunately, no information about language competency was obtained in the first year of the stipend program and accordingly, only data for the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 cohorts are provided. Nevertheless, it is likely that the first cohort shared similar linguistic features with the two subsequent cohorts.

Table 4 shows that the majority of students enrolled in the program since 2006–2007 are bilingual. In 2006–2007, 59% reported that they were bilingual, and in 2007–2008, 51% reported that they were bilingual. Bilingual students reported that they spoke a wide range of languages in addition to English.

TABLE 4

### PROPORTION OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS

LANGUAGE GROUPS	2006–07		2007–08		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English Only	77	41	91	49	168	45
Bilingual *	110	59	93	51	203	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Besides English, these students also speak one or more other language(s).

Table 5 groups the different languages spoken by students in the program into six categories including American Sign Language. The largest category is English Only, with about one-third of the students in the 2006–2007 cohort speaking English only. In the 2007–2008 cohort, the proportion that only spoke English was 48%. The average proportion of “English Only” across the two cohorts is 43%. The most commonly spoken language besides English across both cohorts was Spanish, (121 students or 31% of the cohort). The next category of languages spoken (60 students, 15%) was Asian/Pacific languages including Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. European languages were spoken by 32 students (8%). African languages including Ethiopian, Swahili, and Zulu were next (5 students, 1%). The wide range of languages spoken by the students enrolled in the stipend program is indicative of the program’s success in recruiting students from diverse ethnic and linguistic groups who are able to serve California’s multicultural population.

**TABLE 5**

**LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY STUDENTS**

LANGUAGE GROUPS	2006–07		2007–08		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English only	77	38.0	91	48	168	43
Asian or Asian/Pacific Languages (Tagalog, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Hindi)	37	18.3	23	12	60	15.3
Native North American Language	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Spanish	65	32.2	56	29	121	31
European Languages (Russian, Italian, Portuguese)	17	8.5	15	8	32	8
African Languages (Ethiopian, Zulu, Swahili)	2	1.0	3	2	5	1.2
American Sign Language	4	2.0	2	1	6	1.5
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*The total number of language spoken by the students from both cohorts is different from the number of ethnic origins. This is because some of the students spoke more than one language (English and their native language).*



## Post-Employment (Payback) Data for the 2005–2006 Cohort

As part of its contractual obligations with the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program, CalSWEC is required to collect information from each participating school about student enrollments, graduation rates, and subsequent payback employment of the graduates. The data are compiled at CalSWEC, and quarterly reports are submitted to the California Department of Mental Health. Contractually, CalSWEC is not required to track the students in the program after they had secured employment in an approved mental health agency. Nevertheless, it is desirable to collect information about longer-term employment trends in the mental health system. It would be very useful to know whether graduates of the mental health stipend program continue to work in the mental health system after they have met their one-year post-graduation employment requirement; accordingly, an initial effort to track the subsequent careers of the 2005–2006 cohort was conducted during 2008. This tracking procedure is a prelude to a more extensive tracking study which is in the process of being developed. It is also hoped that future outcome research will involve interviews with students, deans and directors and project coordinators at the participating schools, and staff at employing agencies.

To track the graduates who had completed their employment obligations, doctoral students at the School of Social Welfare at UC Berkeley, working under the direction of Professor James Midgley, contacted the project coordinators at each of the participating schools to obtain information on graduates' subsequent careers. Generally, the project coordinators were able to provide information about the post-payback employment careers of the graduates.

A questionnaire was developed to record information from the project coordinators about the graduates. Telephone interviews were conducted during 2008 with each PC. Although the information collected is of a routine, administrative nature, the data were aggregated and information about particular graduates has remained confidential. Project coordinators were asked, to the best of their knowledge, whether 2005–2006 cohort graduates at their school were still employed in California and working in a community mental health agency, or whether they had moved into another field of practice. It was acknowledged that PCs may not have information about each student; however, most were still in contact with the graduates and knowledgeable about their careers. In some cases, the project coordinator had lost contact with the graduate, and in other cases, they had to personally contact their graduates to obtain the information.

As previously noted, of the 174 students who originally enrolled in the 2005–2006 cohort, 20 did not secure employment in the community mental health system after graduating, and they repaid their stipends. Accordingly, efforts were made to track the 154 graduates who sought and secured employment in the

community mental health system. Information was collected about the agencies in which these graduates secured employment. As is shown in Table 6, all (100%) of the graduates secured employment in either a public (county) mental health agency or in a nonprofit agency contracting with the local county. Of the 154 graduates, 98 (64%) secured employment in a county mental health agency, and 56 (36%) found employment in a nonprofit mental health agency contracting with the local county.

**TABLE 6**

**EMPLOYMENT (PAYBACK) RECORD 2005–2006 COHORT**

EMPLOYMENT RECORD	N	%
A. NUMBER OF GRADUATING STUDENTS	174	100
B. ENTERED EMPLOYMENT PAYBACK	174	
1. Payback requirement		
a. Met payback requirement	154	88.5
b. Dropped out and paid back stipend	20	11.5
2. Field of Services (completed)		
a. Mental Health	154	100
b. Non Mental Health	0	0
3. Type of Agency		
a. Public	98	63.6
b. Contracting CBO	56	36.4

With regard to post-payback employment, the project coordinators were able to track 139 (90%) of the 154 graduates (Table 7). Unfortunately, no information about the remaining 15 was available. Some of the graduates had moved out of state or, for other reasons, were unable to be contacted. Of the 139 for whom information was available, 136 (98%) were still working in California. Three (2%) were reported to have moved to other states after completing their employment payback obligation. Table 8 shows that 128 (94%) of the 139 graduates for whom information was available were still working in the field of community mental health. Only 11 had moved out of mental health and were now working in other social work practice fields such as child welfare, gerontology, or medical social work. Of the 138 graduates for whom information was available, 82 (60%) were working in a public social agency, while the remaining 57 (40%) were working in a nonprofit or other private agency. Perhaps the most interesting finding was that 103 (74%) of the 139 graduates for whom information was available were still working in the agency in which they originally secured employment. This suggests that the mental health stipend program is a successful mechanism for recruiting potential professional social workers who will commit themselves to the mental health field and to the agencies at which they initially found employment. Future research will determine if this trend continues in the longer term.

**TABLE 7**

**POST-EMPLOYMENT RECORD, 2005–2006 COHORT (AS OF DECEMBER 2008)**

POPULATION	N	%
A. Entered employment payback	154	100
B. Able to track AFTER PAYBACK	139	90
C. Unable to track AFTER PAYBACK	15	10

**TABLE 8**

**POST-EMPLOYMENT RECORD 2005–2006 COHORT (AS OF DECEMBER 2008)**

EMPLOYMENT PROGRESS	N	%
A. TOTAL TRACED	139	100
B. CURRENT EMPLOYMENT		
1. Employer (Agency)		
a. The same agency where initially employed	103	74
b. Different agency	36	26
2. Field of Services		
a. Mental Health	128	92
b. Non Mental Health	11	8
3. Type of Agency		
a. Public	82	60
b. Contracting CBO	57	40
4. Place of Employment		
a. California	136	98
b. Out of state	3	2

As previously noted, these data relate to the numbers of graduates who were tracked by the project coordinators. The proportions will differ when the number of students who originally enrolled in the program is considered. When expressed as a proportion of the original enrollment (174 students), the graduates continuing to work in the mental health field in California is 73%. Graduates who continue to work in the same agency at which they were originally employed during the required payback period is 59%. Similarly, the proportions can also be expressed with reference to those who secured payback employment in California’s community mental health system. Approximately 83% of those who entered payback employment continue to work in the community mental health system, and 67% continue to work at the same agency.

## Curriculum Development

When the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program was launched in 2005, priority was given to ensuring that the curricular offerings provided at the participating schools were compatible with the Mental Health Services Act and that an appropriate emphasis was placed on recovery and resilience. The importance of students being prepared to practice in community mental health settings and to serve the neediest groups of people facing the most serious challenges has not only been recognized but is a prime commitment of the program.

While the overall management of the stipend program was assumed by CalSWEC at the School of Social Welfare at UC Berkeley, responsibility for curriculum development was contracted out to Loma Linda University, under the leadership of Dr. Beverly Buckles, the principal investigator. With the assistance of Mr. John Ryan and Ms. Jan Black, a core training curriculum has been developed. In addition, standardized curriculum competencies have been identified, numerous workshops and conferences on curriculum issues have been organized, and ongoing technical advice to the participating schools on curriculum issues has been provided.

In 2005, a series of technical assistance meetings were held with faculty and agency representatives to ensure that curriculum development proceeded efficiently and met the expectations of stakeholders such as the Department of Mental Health, the county mental health agencies, and advocacy and consumer groups. These meetings also provided resources to assist faculty in the development of appropriate curricular offerings. Particular emphasis was placed on agency field work to ensure that students were being given the best opportunities to apply their academic knowledge to practice situations. Syllabi from courses that incorporate the Mental Health Curriculum Competencies offered at MSW programs in California were collected and posted on the CalSWEC Mental Health website to support curriculum development efforts. Specialized meetings and curriculum resource development activities continued throughout the 2006–2007 academic year, and efforts were made to identify innovative strategies and teaching and learning collaboratives.

Meetings with Department of Mental Health and other relevant stakeholder groups were also held to keep them apprised of the curriculum development activities and to disseminate the work of the CalSWEC Mental Health Initiative. Participation in these meetings provided an opportunity to learn about the needs of specific stakeholder groups such as the small/rural counties, and to identify strategies that can address their needs.

---

In July 2006, a survey concerning the implementation of the Mental Health Competencies, the Curriculum Competency Implementation Survey, was sent to all participating schools. The survey showed that 7 (41%) of the participating schools had a concentration in mental health prior to passage of the Mental Health Services Act and were easily able to incorporate the competencies into current curricular offerings. Several curriculum strategies were adopted by the schools that did not have a mental health concentration to ensure that these competencies are incorporated into the curriculum. The three most widely used strategies were the development of specialized seminars for mental health stipend students, the development of a required mental health elective for stipend students, and regular meetings with the school curriculum committee to discuss the progress and next steps in strengthening the mental health curriculum.

Schools also reported on their efforts to infuse evidence-based information into coursework and fieldwork learning. Several innovative strategies were adopted including the development of a website for one school's stipend program. In addition, planning for regional and sub-regional meetings with schools and county mental health and contract agencies was also underway. One school reported offering coursework to stipend students at the local county mental health site.

In the survey, the schools communicated future plans and strategies for implementing the curriculum competencies in the academic 2006–2007 year. These strategies included additional specialized seminars for mental health stipend students, increased involvement of agency-based field instructors in curriculum development, further participation of consumers and families in curriculum development and the delivery of content, and increased regional partnerships. In addition, all the schools were interested in having technical assistance meetings with university faculty, agency field instructors, and professional staff to foster closer collaboration between the schools and county agencies. Such meetings also help future curriculum implementation efforts. An additional finding was that all the schools expressed interest in CalSWEC developing and providing specialized training in recovery for university faculty and agency field instructors.

The results of the completed Curriculum Competency Implementation Survey were compiled and distributed to the CalSWEC Mental Health Committee, the CalSWEC Executive Committee, and the CalSWEC Board of Directors. A presentation of the survey results was made to the California Mental Health Directors in January 2007 by Mr. Ryan and Ms. Black.

Efforts to further develop the mental health social work curriculum and competencies have continued. Reports are disseminated to schools of social work, county mental health agencies, nonprofit mental health contract agencies, and others in the public mental health community in several ways. First, as noted in the March 2007 report, interested parties were invited to sign up for the Mental Health Initiative Google Listserv, where promising practices at each of the consortium schools are e-mailed to subscribers. Second, the Mental Health Curriculum Resources website was launched which serves as a clearinghouse for a variety of reports, academic papers, and presentations related to curriculum and program resources.

---

In addition to the implementation of the mental health competencies, the schools have developed evaluation tools to assess the level of integration of the competencies into their curriculum as well as evaluation of the students' understanding of the curriculum skills and knowledge. In order to identify courses in which the competencies were offered, schools implemented a matrix listing CalSWEC's curriculum competencies and the courses in which these competencies were being covered. Outcome surveys were utilized to assess the students' grasp of the mental health competency content. Efforts to further develop evaluation tools continue.

To assess the development of faculty and field instructors, a second survey, the Mental Health Curriculum Implementation Survey, was conducted in summer 2007. This survey built on the original information collected during the first year (2005–2006) of the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program.

The CalSWEC Mental Health Committee received funding from the Zellerbach Family Foundation in 2007 for a project entitled “A Model for Implementation of the Mental Health Competency Curriculum.” The activities and projects under this grant support critically needed curriculum development and implementation activities, as identified in the 2006 Curriculum Competency Implementation Survey. The five main work areas are as follows:

1. Collaboration and System Sustainability Activities
2. Regional, Statewide, and National Collaboration Activities
3. Curriculum Development and Infusion Activities
4. Curriculum Related Development Activities
5. Evaluation Activities

The Zellerbach Family Foundation also supported the development of four Mental Health Curriculum Modules during 2008. The four new modules will be posted on the CalSWEC and Loma Linda University Mental Health Curriculum Resource website. The modules are:

- *Recovery* by Betty Dahlquist, MSW, Executive Director, CASRA;
- *Co-Occurring Disorders* by Dr. Sally Mathiesen, Professor, San Diego State University, School of Social Work;
- *Specialized Interventions for Older Adults with Mental Illness* by Dr. Michael Johnson, Professor, California State University, Stanislaus, Department of Social Work
- *Specialized Interventions for Children and Transitional Aged Youth with SED* by Dr. Sigrid James, Professor, Loma Linda University, Department of Social Work and Social Ecology.

Each of the modules contains nine hours of lecture content, with accompanying exercises and reference materials, and can be used as a total course or as “drop-in” lectures in a variety of courses.

---

A series of three Curriculum Infusion Seminars have been held. The first focused on recovery, with presenters Mr. Chad Costello, MSW, director of Public Policy, Mental Health America, Los Angeles, and Ms. Heather Martin, consumer and member of MHALA's innovative program The Village. The second seminar was on co-occurring disorders, with presenter Dr. Tom Freese, UCLA, Integrated Substance Abuse Programs and Pacific Southwest Addiction Technology. The third seminar focused on specialized interventions with children with SED, transitional age youth, and older adults with mental illness. The presenters included Dr. Sigrid James, Loma Linda University, and Dr. Michael Johnson, California State University, Stanislaus. This seminar was repeated to provide access for individuals from the Central and Northern portions of the state.

In summer 2008, an in-depth discussion was held regarding the strategies that schools were using to implement the current Mental Health Curriculum Competencies. The following areas and strategies were identified: 1) challenges of offering specialized electives, 2) utilization of specialized seminars for students, 3) utilization of extra hours of field seminar/seminars to ensure delivery of all relevant content areas, and 4) the role of weekly support groups. Ongoing depth and breadth issues in social work education were also discussed. The question arose about how to ensure the fit with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requirements and specialization areas in the curriculum. The context for the discussion was that while all the participating schools meet CSWE requirements, some programs have a specialization in mental health and others do not. For the schools with a specialization, the infusion and implementation of the mental health competency curriculum is easier than in schools without a specialization, since the latter group must either develop specialized courses for the stipend students, utilize elective courses for the content, or infuse the content throughout the social work curriculum. As the mental health competency curriculum enters its fourth year, all of the schools are actively engaged in implementing the offerings and are using innovative strategies to do so.

The Statewide Mental Health Summit, held on September 24, 2008, in Sacramento, was very successful. Over 120 participants representing academic, community practice, county mental health, and a variety of stakeholders in the mental health field came together to share national and statewide trends and issues. Keynote speakers included John Morris of the Annapolis Coalition, Dr. Stephen Mayberg, director of the California Department of Mental Health, and Dr. Beverly Buckles, director of the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology at Loma Linda University. The summit was underwritten by the grant funded by the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

The competencies approved by the CalSWEC Board of Directors in May 2005 have been in place for three years now. Curriculum implementation surveys have provided basic information on the implementation strategies being utilized by the schools. The last Mental Health Initiative Committee meeting in September 2008 included an in-depth review of these competencies. Discussions have begun in those areas which need revision, and a process is currently being established to involve the participating schools in a full review of these competencies and their implementation.

## Challenges and Future Directions

After three years of educating graduate social work students for professional practice in California's community mental health system and the signing of a new three-year Interagency Agreement with the Department of Mental Health in fall 2008, the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program is now well-established. As the fourth cohort of students prepares to graduate this summer, another group is in the process of being recruited. Although the long-term impact of the program on the staffing of the state's mental health services has still to be assessed, there is no doubt that the program has already had a significant impact.

There is a strong ongoing commitment from the participating schools as well as the state, county, and non-profit agencies to work for the program's success. As previously noted, a major development was the appointment of a full-time director, Ms. Gwen Foster, who will be working closely with stakeholders to plan for the program's future and to ensure that it meets its goals.

A more detailed evaluation of the program has also been proposed to obtain in-depth information about the program's graduates. In the immediate future, the tracking of graduates will continue and, like the study of the subsequent careers of the 2005–2006 cohort, more in-depth information about the 2006–2007 and subsequent cohorts will be obtained. In addition to tracking graduates past their one-year payback obligation, it is also proposed that more information be obtained about the effectiveness of the stipend program in preparing students for employment in community mental health. This will involve interviews with former students, faculty and staff at the participating schools, and representatives of the agencies that employ graduates. It is hoped that this will result in a better understanding of the factors that contribute to the success of the program as well as those that detract from its effectiveness. With this information, it will be possible to make changes that will ensure the program's long-term success.

When the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program was launched in 2005, a variety of challenges including staffing, recruitment of students, monitoring compliance, managing budgets, and dealing with unforeseen difficulties were anticipated; these were successfully handled through the commitment of the staff at the participating schools and the leadership of their deans and directors. The support provided by staff at the Department of Mental Health including Dr. Steven Mayberg, Mr. Warren Hayes, and Ms. Inna Tysoe were equally important in ensuring that the program was successfully launched. Staff at the county mental health agencies and at nonprofit organizations have also made a vital contribution to the program and its early success. In particular, county directors including Dr. Marvin Southard and Mr. Allan Rawland gave exceptional support and advice.



---

At this time, California faces unprecedented challenges arising from the current fiscal situation and the wider global recession. These developments have serious implications for the future of mental health services in the state. It is likely that graduates of the mental health stipend program will experience difficulties in securing employment as agencies face growing financial pressures and mental health agencies struggle to meet their obligations to serve their clients. Universities are also facing serious budgetary retrenchments. Similarly, those who are served by the state's community mental health services face unprecedented challenges. Nevertheless, the commitment remains strong to continue to prepare professional social workers to provide the best possible professional services. It is hoped that the Mental Health Social Work Stipend Program will continue to provide the high-quality professional social work education in community mental health that it has distinguished it to date.

